



REACHING ANOTHER LEVEL

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HOW TO MOVE UPWARD

Select Powerful Literature

- **Criteria for Literature for Oral Interpretation Contests**
 - Is it INTERPRETATIVE rather than ESCAPE literature?



WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

- ESCAPE LITERATURE IS WRITTEN SIMPLY TO ENTERTAIN
- DESIGNED TO TAKE US OUT OF THE REAL WORLD
- FULL OF TRICKS AND GIMMICKS
- (MAGIC – pull rabbits out of a hat; saw a person in half; merely a trick)



INTERPRETATIVE LITERATURE

- WRITTEN TO CHANGE YOU
- EXPANDS & REFINES OUR MINDS
- GIVES US MORE THAN MERELY PLEASURE




INTERPRETATIVE LITERATURE

- ILLUMINATES SOME ASPECT OF HUMAN LIFE OR HUMAN BEHAVIOR
- DEEPENS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF REAL LIFE
- TAKES US DEEPER INTO THE REAL WORLD
- PRESENTS US WITH INSIGHT



INTERPRETATIVE LITERATURE

- GIVES US A KEENER AWARENESS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN IN A SOMETIMES FRIENDLY, SOMETIMES HOSTILE WORLD
- HELPS US UNDERSTAND OUR WORLD, OUR NEIGHBORS, AND OURSELVES
- (NOT MAGIC – TAKES US “BEHIND THE SCENES” TO SHOW US THE PROPS, MIRRORS, AND TO MAKE CLEAR THE ILLUSIONS)



**ESCAPE LITERATURE
AND
INTERPRETATIVE LITERATURE
ARE AT OPPOSITE ENDS
OF A SCALE**



HOW TO MOVE UPWARD

- **Criteria for Literature for Oral Interpretation Contests**
 - Does the piece have UNIVERSAL appeal?
 - Does it touch emotions all humans can relate to?
 - Fear, rejection, hope, compassion



HOW TO MOVE UPWARD

- Does the piece show **INDIVIDUALITY** in its treatment of the subject?
- Does it approach a common subject in a unique way?



HOW TO MOVE UPWARD

- Does it promote SUGGESTION by causing the listener to question, to wonder, to re-examine ideas, relationships? Do you want to go back and read it again and again? Do you experience something new and fresh each time you read it?



MOVING UPWARD

- Can the EAR EASILY FOLLOW this piece?
 - Vivid and emotional action will hold the attention of the audience. Abstract, philosophical thought will not always do that.



MOVING UPWARD

- Does this literature appeal to the SENSES?
 - Is it heavy on images?
- Are the characters revealed via 2-way movement?
 - What a person IS causes his actions; what he DOES reveals who he is.



MOVING UPWARD

- A character is not just someone who appears in the literature.
- A character is a combination of:
 - Emotions
 - Beliefs
 - Values
 - Attitudes
 - Desires
 - ideas



MOVING UPWARD

- Look for selections that have **DEVELOPING CHARACTERS** rather than flat, stock, static characters who don't change but are the same sort of person at the end of the piece as in the beginning

POWERFUL PERFORMANCES

- **Essential** to every contest performance
 - Does the selection **fit** the reader?
 - Does the performance fulfill the **LETTER** and the **SPIRIT** of the category descriptor?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

Once you've found that perfect piece, a critical step in performance is to **analyze the literature.**



LITERARY ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND:

What do I know about the author?

Why did the author write this piece?

Is this information important to understanding the selection?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND:

Is there a connection between author and a character/incident in the piece?

What social and historical information is important to understand the selection?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

- **Are there unfamiliar words in the piece?**
- If so what do they mean? (always, always, always look up each word you do not know. Learn both its meaning and its pronunciation.
- There are **denotative** meanings: literal dictionary meanings essential to know.
- There are **connotative** meanings: associated meanings that suggest things in addition to the literal meaning.
- There may be **allusions**: references to persons, places, events that call up relevant associations.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Who is speaking?

- Is it the author?
- Is it a main or minor character?
- Is it someone outside the story?

A performer must know who the PERSONA/SPEAKER is and from whose point of view the experience is told.



LITERARY ANALYSIS

Who is listening?

- Is the piece geared to a general audience?
- Is there a specific listener in mind?
- Is the person speaking to his son? His barber? A sweetheart?
- Is the audience overhearing what the character is saying?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

- **What is the dominate **MOOD** of the selection?**
- Is it one of sadness?
- Is it one of emptiness? Bitterness?
- Is it one of playfulness?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

- **When and Where does the action take place?**
- Does it happen at the beach?
- Does it happen in the 1960's?
- Are there changes in time and place within the selection?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

What is the plot?

- What action happens?
- When does the climax occur?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

- **What are the dominant SENSORY IMAGES?**
- Discover the words or phrases that stir the imagination and the emotions.



LITERARY ANALYSIS

Where does the CLIMAX occur?

- **Logical Climax** (often called the CRISIS): the point at which the conflict becomes so tense that a resolution must occur, and after which, only one outcome is possible.
- **Emotional Climax**: the moment of highest emotional impact and involvement for the reader



LITERARY ANALYSIS

Sometimes: the highest emotional intensity coincides with the logical climax. Often, however, this is not the case.



LITERARY ANALYSIS

What is the **THEME** of the selection?

- THEME is the basic idea that the author is suggesting and that runs underneath the action.
- In one sentence, state the central idea of the piece.



LITERARY ANALYSIS

How does this literary work keep you in touch with life right now?



LITERARY ANALYSIS

What would you like the audience to feel, to experience, to imagine, or know as a result of your performance?



EVERY STEP IS ESSENTIAL

- There are numerous steps in preparing a winning performance that **Reaches Another Level.**
- Analyze the literature
- Create and score your manuscript
- Vocalize your performance
- Bring the literature to life with body language/gestures
- Prepare your Introduction
- Rehearse! Rehearse! Rehearse!



MAKING MAGIC

*Not until you have performed
Literary Analysis, are you ready to
perform “Magic” for 7 minutes!*